

ARTICLE 33 AUTHORIZE AND RATIFY REMOTE TOWN MEETINGS

To see if the town will vote to authorize the Select Board to petition the Massachusetts General Court for legislation providing that notwithstanding the provisions of any general or special law or by-law to the contrary, all acts and proceedings taken by the town at an annual or special town meeting held in 2022 by remote participation by electronic means in accordance with Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2020, as amended by Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, and all actions taken pursuant thereto, are ratified, validated and confirmed to the same extent as if the said Annual or Special Town Meeting had been held in full compliance with any applicable general or special law or by-law; and further to authorize the Select Board to approve amendments to said act before its enactment by the General Court that are within the scope of the general objectives of the petition; or act in any other manner in relation thereto.

(Inserted by the Select Board)

DESCRIPTION: In June 2020, the Legislature temporarily provided express authorization for representative Town Meetings to be held by remote means due to the COVID-19 pandemic. That authorization expired on December 16, 2021. Shortly thereafter, but before the Warrant issued, the discovery of the Omicron COVID-19 variant suggested a potential need for a remote Town Meeting option. This article would authorize the Select Board to petition the General Court for special legislation that would confirm the validity of any actions taken at a Town Meeting being held remotely instead of in person if health and safety conditions continue to warrant a remote meeting. While the Town has worked with its legislative delegation to renew the legislative authorization, the Town is not sure whether that legislation will be adopted at the time of our Town Meeting and this article would provide an additional opportunity to ensure the validity of actions taken at the 2022 Lexington Annual Town Meeting and any Special Town Meetings.